

**119:9** *By what* shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to your word. **10** *With my whole heart* have I sought you: O let me not wander from your commandments. **11** Your word have I hid *in my heart*, that I might not sin against you. **12** *Blessed* are you, O LORD: teach me your statutes. **13** *With my lips* have I declared all the judgments of your mouth. **14** I have rejoiced *in the way of your testimonies*, as much as in all riches. **15** I will meditate *in your precepts*, and have respect unto your ways. **16** I will delight myself *in your statutes*: I will not forget your word.

#### By what?

The tone of the Beth stanza is set by the opening *How* question. *How* literally is *by what*. So the Beth stanza is about means, and every verse except verse 12 begins with a prepositional phrase. The same Hebrew preposition is translated *by* in verse 9, *with* in verses 10 and 13, and *in* in verses 11, 14, 15, and 16.

Most sentences in Hebrew begin with a verb. Yet seven out of eight Beth verses begin with a prepositional phrase in the original word order. By putting prepositional phrases first, the psalmist emphasized the content of those phrases. Notice the bold type in the verses above.

It is helpful to read the prepositional phrases first. Thus verse 11 becomes, "In my heart, I have hid your word so that I might not sin against you." If the psalmist had put the verb (to hide) and subject (himself) first, he would have emphasized what he himself could do, but since "in my heart" comes first, the place where God works (in the heart) through his word is emphasized instead. Moreover the opening "By what" question shows from the beginning that the Lord has something, his word, by which he can change a person, even a young person, from within.



#### What is the Beth stanza (#2) like?

It is like a young, inexperienced hiker (5) going to an excellent and honest outfitter and being equipped by an expert with exactly what he or she needs to avoid trouble and prosper during a long hike. How thankful such a young hiker would be! He or she would surely bless the outfitter (12) as well as rejoice in the (biblical) equipment received (14).

Moreover, Paul shows that the Lord, himself delights in supplying the man of God with everything that is needed for biblical ministry (1 Tim. 3:16-17).

Though brand loyalty in hiking and camping equipment is not necessarily a good thing, regarding God's word it is essential. There is no legitimate alternative. (Notice how often *you* and *your* appear in this Psalm.)

#### Therefore?

Our equipment is God's word, and it is only by God's word that we can please him. We must delight in this equipment (16), use it constantly (15), and not forget to take it with us day by day (10-11).